

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 SAM-01 AID-20 OMB-01

COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 SY-10 A-01 OPR-02 PC-04

IO-14 AGR-20 TRSE-00 NIC-01 CU-04 DRC-01 /173 W

----- 078490

O R 061155Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9533

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 1840

NEA PASS AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, IN

SUBJ: LAW AND ORDER IN WEST AND EAST INDIA

REF: BOMBAY 0266

1. GUJARAT: VIOLENCE ERUPTED AGAIN IN GUJARAT ON FEBRUARY 5 WITH REPORTS OF POLICE FIRING ON MOBS IN AHMEDABAD, SURAT, UNJHA TALOD AND SIDDHPUR. CURFEWS WERE IMPOSED IN AT LEAST 10 TOWNS INCLUDING RAJKOT, SURAT, BARODA, BHAVNAGAR AND PATAN. IN BHAVNAGAR, SURENDRANAGAR AND UNJHA, CONGRESS MLA'S WERE TARGETS OF MOBS AND CHIEF MINISTER PATEL WAS BURNED IN EFFIGY IN BHAVNAGAR AND SURAT. IN LATTER THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION DECIDED TO SHIFT MRS. GANDHI'S PORTRAIT FROM CORPORATION HALL TO CITY MUSEUM FOLLOWING ADOPTION MOTION TABLED BY MAYOR.

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2. NEW WAVE OF AGITATION TAKING PLACE AGAINST BACKGROUND OF CONTINUED SHORTAGES FOODGRAINS AND ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES AND NO AMELIORATION PRICE LEVELS. WHEAT AND RICE SCARCE AND GOG TRYING SHORE UP SITUATION BY DISTRIBUTING AT HEAVILY SUBSIDIZED PRICE HIGH COST COARSE GRAIN BOUGHT OUTSIDE STATE. SUGAR HAS DISAPPEARED FROM SHOPS AND THERE ARE LONG QUEUES TO BUY EXPENSIVE EDIBLE OIL IN STATE WHICH MAJOR PRODUCER AND FOLLOWING BUMPER GROUNDNUT CROP.

3. OUSTER CHIEF MINISTER PATEL, HIS MINISTERS AND RESIGNATION CONGRESS MLA'S ARE INCREASINGLY PRINCIPAL TARGETS OF DEMONSTRATIONS. BETWEEN PRO AND ANTI-CHIEF MINISTER PATEL FACTIONS IN CONGRESS PARTY. "TIMES OF INDIA" EDITORIAL TODAY MAKES POINT THAT NEITHER DISSIDENT MINISTERS NOR ANY OF THE OTHER MINISTERS "CAN EMERGE FROM THEIR HOMES, MUCH LESS ATTEND TO THE TASKS OF ADMINISTRATION, WITHOUT FEAR OF BEING ABUSED, STONED OR SPAT UPON BY THE PUBLIC. WHOM PRECISELY THEY CAN CLAIM TO REPRESENT IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES IS HARD TO SEE."

4. COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS IN GUJARAT DECIDED AT MEETING ON FEBRUARY 3 OF GUJARAT STATE FEDERATION COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (REPRESENTING SOME 8,000 COLLEGE TEACHERS) TO SUSPEND TEACHING ACTIVITIES AND BOYCOTT EXAMS TO PRESS THEIR DEMANDS. LATTER INCLUDE DISSOLUTION OF STATE ASSEMBLY (ALSO SOUGHT BY OPPOSITION PARTIES), PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO CORRUPTION AND POLICE EXCESSES, AS WELL AS RELEASE OF THOSE DETAINED UNDER MAINTENANCE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT (SOME 54 HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN AHMEDABAD THUS FAR UNDER MISA). BY THIS MOVE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS HAVE JOINED RANKS WITH STUDENTS. (ACTUALLY, COLLEGES HAVE BARELY FUNCTIONED FOR LAST MONTH.)

5. REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH CONGRESS FACTIONS ARE SHUTTLE BETWEEN DELHI AND AHMEDABAD FOR TALKS WITH CENTRAL LEADERSHIP AND CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND. THIS HAS PROVIDED MUCH GRIST FOR SPECULATION BUT WHEN SIFTED IT STILL LOOKS AS THOUGH THE CENTER INTENDS TO TRY TO HOLD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON TO CHIMANBHAI PATEL UNTIL AFTER THE UP ELECTIONS.

6. GUJARAT MP CLOSE TO PATEL TOLD POL COUNSELOR FEBRUARY 6 ALL ONE COULD DO WAS CROSS ONE'S FINGERS WHEN SPEAKING OF PATEL'S CHANCES OF REMAINING IN OFFICE. UNION FOOD MINISTER FAKRUDDIN ALI AHMED FEBRUARY 5 DESCRIBED FOOD DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN GUJARAT AS "MIS-MANAGED", WHICH PATEL DENIED AND EXPRESSED DOUBT AHMED

HAD ACTUALLY MADE COMMENT (HE HAD). MP BLAMED SITUATION ON FAILURE OF CONTRAL GOVERNMENT TO MAKE GOOD FOOD SUPPLIES TO GUJARAT (STATE WAS 100,000 TONS SHORT AND CENTER, AFTER PROMISING 50,000 TONS, HAD ACTUALLY DELIVERED 15,000). UNREST AND DISSATISFACTION OBVIOUSLY FOLLOWED. MP AGREED DISORDERS WERE UNORGANIZED BUT FOCUSED AROUND STUDENTS AND SAID HE SAW LITTLE PROSPECT OF THEIR ENDING SHORTLY. ALTHOUGH ARMY CONTINUES TO BE DEPLOYED IN AHMEDABAD (BUT NOT IN ANY OTHER GUJARAT CITIES), IT THUS FAR APPARENTLY HAS NOT TAKEN PART IN SUPPRESSION OF ANY DEMONSTRATIONS.

7. COMMENT: THERE IS NOTHING IN THE GUJARAT SITUATION TO SUGGEST THAT IT IS LIKELY TO GET BETTER SOON. CHIMANBHAI PATEL AND HIS MINISTRY BY NOW HAVE BEEN DIS-CREDITED AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY MINISTERIAL RESHUFFLE WILL SUFFICE TO SATISFY THE SITUATION. EVEN THOUGH FOODGRAINS AND ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES ARE RUSHED TO GUJARAT AND PRICES BROUGHT DOWN AS A RESULT, CURRENT AGITATION FOR IMPOSITION PRESIDENT'S RULE AND FRESH ELECTIONS LIKELY CONTINUE. EVEN IF PRESIDENT'S RULE RESTORED, PROBLEM OF FOOD AVAILABILITY WILL CONTINUE UNLESS CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IMMEDIATELY INCREASES SUPPLIES IN WHICH CASE IT WILL APPEAR TO HAVE WAITED UNTIL PATEL DISLODGED BEFORE MAKING FOOD AVAILABLE WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN PROVIDED EARLIER.

8. MAHARASHTRA AND WEST BENGAL: MINOR RIOTING OCCURRED IN POONA FEBRUARY 5 WHERE CROWDS LOOTED A NUMBER OF SHOPS AND STORES CLOSED DOWN FOR A PERIOD. IN WEST BENGAL, POLICE OPENED FIRE FEBRUARY 5 ON A CROWD OF VILLAGERS DEMANDING FOODGRAINS THROUGH FAIRPRICE SHOPS AND ONE PERSON WAS KILLED. THIS WAS THE FIRST POLICE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FIRING ON FOOD DEMONSTRATORS IN WEST BENGAL.

9. ABOVE MESSAGE BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY CONGEN BOMBAY.
SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

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